

# The eastern and southern populations of the Mottled Spinetail

by R. K. Brooke

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Recent literature indicates some confusion over the range and subspecific variation of the Mottled Spinetail *Telacanthura ussberi* (Sharpe). Mackworth-Praed & Grant (1962) attribute the one specimen from Zumbo in extreme western Mozambique to both *T. u. stictilaema* (Reichenow) and to *benguellensis* (Neumann). White (1965) places all eastern African birds in *stictilaema* which he regards as having a continuous distribution in ecologically suitable areas. Clancey (1968) has realised that this is not correct and identified a specimen from the Devure River which I have also seen as *benguellensis*. While holding a Frank M. Chapman Memorial Grant from the American Museum of Natural History in New York I was able to examine many specimens of *T. ussberi* from most parts of its range in the museums listed in Brooke (1969). I am also obliged to Mr. P. A. Clancey for the loan of material in the Durban Museum, to Mr. C. W. Benson for examining material in the British Museum (Natural History) on my behalf, and to Dr. A. A. da Rosa Pinto for facilities for study at the Instituto de Investigacao Cientifica de Angola at Sa da Bandeira. En passant I found that *T. u. senegalensis* (Neumann) was inseparable from nominate *ussberi*. It is on the ranges and characters of *stictilaema* and *benguellensis* that I wish to comment.

Mackworth-Praed & Grant (1962) are correct in saying that *benguellensis* is duller black above than *stictilaema* in comparable plumage: this is apparent from the freshly moulted first primary of the type in New York. Their ranges do not meet. I know of no other character for separating the races in equivalent states of moult.

*T. u. stictilaema* (Reichenow) 1879: Ualimi on the Tana River in Kenya occurs both in evergreen forest and savanna woodland. There is material which I have examined myself unless an authority is cited from:—

Somalia: upper Juba River (Moltoni & Ruscone 1940).

Kenya: Chambiti Hills near Chifulu (P. L. Britton *in litt.*, on material in the National Museum in Nairobi), 30 miles north-north-east of Kibwezi, Kilifi, Meru, Mombasa, Nyambeni Mts., Sokoke, Useguha, Ualimi (these last two both from Reichenow 1902).

Tanzania: Amani (Benson *in litt.* on material in the B.M.N.H.).

Vincent's (1934) sight records from the Lurio River in northern Mozambique cannot be placed racially in the present state of knowledge, and this also applies to those of Procter (1968) in the Ruaha National Park in south-west Tanzania.

Wing lengths range and average:—

♂♂ 139–146 av. (7) 142.6 mm;

♀♀ 132–147 av. (12) 141.6 mm;

overall 132–147 av. (20) 142.6 mm.

Weights including those in Moreau (1944) range and average:—

♂♂ 30–32 av. (3) 30.67 g;

♀♀ 28.5–34.6 av. (5) 31.52 g;

overall 28.5–34.6 av. (8) 31.20 g.

*T. u. benguellensis* (Neumann) 1908: Blaasbalkfontein in Angola again

occurs in both evergreen forest and savanna woodland. There is material which I have examined myself unless an authority is cited from:—

Angola: Blaasbalkfontein, Mantipa, Cassoallala, Vila Salazar (the latter two from Benson *in litt.*, on material in the B.M.N.H.).

Zambia: Kabulamena (Winterbottom 1942).

Rhodesia: Chikwizo Tribal Trust Land, 25 miles east of Chirundu, Devure River near Birchenough Bridge, lower Hunyani River, Lusito River, Mkota T. T. L.

Mozambique: Zumbo (Benson *in litt.*, on material in the B.M.N.H.), Lusito River, Funhalouro (da Rosa Pinto 1959).

South Africa (Transvaal): Kruger National Park, sight records (A. C. Kemp in MS list).

Wing lengths including those measured by C. W. Benson on my behalf range and average:—

♂♂ 141–151 av. (8) 145.8 mm;

♀♀ 142–150 av. (10) 146.7 mm;

overall 141–151 av. (20) 146.3 mm.

Weights range and average:—

(a) Rhodesia

♂♂ 31.3–36.5 av. (4) 34.40 g;

♀♀ 33.0–37.5 av. (3) 35.37 g;

unsexed trapped on 7 June 31–36 av. (7) 33.34 g;

overall 31.0–37.5 av. (14) 34.08 g.

(b) Angola

♂ 27, ♀ 32 g.

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## *Amadina fasciata* (Gmelin) as a “nest-parasite”

by G. R. Cunningham-van Someren

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*Amadina fasciata* has been recorded as nesting in association with various ploceids, utilising vacated nests of *Passer emimibey* (Hartlaub), *Pseudonigrita arnaudi* (Bonaparte) and *Ploceus* spp.: see Lynes (1924), the van Somerens (1945) (they omitted to give the locality of many of the nest colonies examined, but they were at the south end of Lake Magadi, Kenya), Friedmann (1960) and Mackworth-Praed & Grant (1955). Lynes describes the nest of